

COMPETENCY-DRIVEN BENEFITS REALIZATION MODEL FOR
MINIMIZATION OF POST-CONTRACT TRANSACTION COSTS IN DESIGN-
BUILD (D&B) DELIVERY SYSTEMS

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To my beloved father and mother



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ABSTRACT

The construction industry has been struggling with the issue of inconsistent performance with respect to cost of projects, completion time and the delivery of a quality product. In an attempt to address this issue the Design-Build (D&B) project delivery system was initiated primarily to overcome the shortcomings of the traditional procurement strategies. Although, traditionally D&B delivery system was aimed to greatly enhance client's benefits, this has not significantly been achieved. It lacks clear benefits realization management process to deliver the planned client's benefits. In particular, the Transaction Costs (TCs) incurred at the post-contract phase (PTCs) through D&B system has been the subject of criticism, wherein it has been unable to achieve the expected resounding success of a total shift away from the issues attributed to the traditional systems. This research aims to establish the importance of leveraging on D&B project team-competency and commitment structured within a strategic Benefits Realization Management framework to optimize client's benefits in terms of minimizing PTCs. The focus is on the aspect of competencies of key project participants and their project team commitment with respect to minimizing TCs that is structured within a Benefits Realization Management (BRM) practice. Questionnaire survey data was obtained from 231 respondents out of 357 administered questionnaires to G7 contractors registered under CIDB Malaysia that was based on a systematic sampling of the existing CIDB contractor database. The partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) technique was used to test the relationships being hypothesized and to validate and confirm the developed Competency Driven Benefits Realization Model (CD-BREM). Exploratory preliminary research findings reveal that post-contract TCs for D&B projects range from 3.5% to 13.5% of the project value. The primary research findings reveal that D&B team commitment has partial mediating effect between team competency and post-contract TCs. Whilst, BRM was found to have a partial mediating effect between team competency and post-contract TCs and no moderating effect as initially hypothesized. In general the research findings indicate that team competency, commitment and BRM have significant positive influences on post-contract TCs. This research provides a multi-dimensional perspective of the D&B project benefits realization concept and has the potential to address the issue of minimizing PTCs, which is seen as a social waste of wealth. Using CD-BREM it is possible to identify key human factors that can contribute to high project performance that also serves as an enabling mechanism for realizing the full potential of the D&B method for delivering successful projects. This research is timely to help reverse the trend of poor performance within the construction industry as a whole. Further work on the implementation of this CD-BREM model on construction projects and the consideration of including additional independent variables in the research theoretical framework can be explored to strengthen the credibility of the outcome of this research which is aimed at minimizing PTCs.

ABSTRAK

Industri pembinaan telah bergelut dengan isu prestasi yang tidak konsisten berkenaan dengan kos projek, masa siap dan penghasilan produk yang berkualiti. Dalam usaha untuk menangani isu ini sistem perolehan Design-Build (D&B) projek telah dimulakan terutamanya untuk mengatasi kelemahan strategi perolehan tradisional. Walaupun, secara tradisinya sistem perolehan D&B bertujuan untuk meningkatkan manfaat pelanggan, ini tidak dicapai dengan begitu ketara. Sistem perolehan D&B tidak mempunyai proses *pengurusan kesedaran manfaat* yang jelas untuk memastikan faedah optimum bagi pelanggan. Khususnya, Kos Transaksi pada fasa pasca-kontrak (PTCs) melalui sistem D&B telah menjadi subjek kritikan, ia tidak dapat mencapai kejayaan yang dibangga-banggakan berbanding dengan sistem tradisional. Kajian ini bertujuan untuk mewujudkan kepentingan kompetensi dan komitmen pasukan projek D&B di dalam rangka kerja Pengurusan Faedah Kesedaran strategik untuk mengoptimumkan manfaat pelanggan dengan mengurangkan PTCs. Tumpuan adalah kepada aspek kecekapan peserta utama projek dan komitmen pasukan projek bagi tujuan meminimumkan TCs yang berstruktur dalam Pengurusan Faedah Kesedaran (BRM). Data soal kaji selidik diperolehi daripada 231 responden daripada 357 soal selidik yang diedarkan kepada kontraktor G7 yang berdaftar di bawah CIDB Malaysia, berdasarkan persampelan sistematik pangkalan data kontraktor CIDB yang sedia ada. Teknik PLS-SEM telah digunakan untuk menguji hubungan yang hipotesis dan untuk mengesahkan dan mengesahkan dibangunkan Kompetensi Faedah Didorong Merealisasikan Model (CD-BREM). Dapatan penyelidikan awal secara penerokaan mendedahkan bahawa PTCs untuk D&B projek terdiri antara julat 3.5% hingga 13.5% nilai projek. Dapatan kajian utama mendedahkan bahawa komitmen pasukan D&B mempunyai kesan perantara separa antara kecekapan pasukan dan PTCs. Sementara itu, BRM didapati mempunyai kesan perantara separa antara kecekapan pasukan dan PTCs dan tiada kesan kesederhanaan seperti dijangkakan pada hipotesis awalan. Secara umum dapatan kajian menunjukkan bahawa kecekapan dan komitmen pasukan serta BRM mempunyai pengaruh positif yang signifikan terhadap PTCs. Kajian ini memberi perspektif pelbagai dimensi bagi konsep kesedaran manfaat D&B projek dan mempunyai potensi untuk menangani isu meminimumkan PTCs, yang dilihat sebagai satu pembaziran kekayaan sosial. Faktor-faktor manusia utama yang boleh menyumbang kepada prestasi projek yang tinggi serta berfungsi sebagai mekanisme yang membolehkan untuk merealisasikan potensi kaedah D&B untuk menghasilkan projek yang berjaya dapat dicapai dengan menggunakan CD-BREM. Kajian ini adalah tepat pada masanya untuk membantu meningkatkan prestasi dalam industri pembinaan secara keseluruhan.

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LIST OF SYMBOLS AND ABBREVIATION

TCs	Transaction Costs
PTCs	Post-Contract Transaction Costs
BR	Benefits Realization
BRM	Benefits Realization Management
CD-BREM	Competency-Driven Benefits Realization Model
PLS	Partial Least Square
D&B	Design & Build
SEM	Structural Equation Modeling
TCE	Transaction Costs Economics
TCT	Transaction Costs Theory



PTTA UTHM
PERPUSTAKAAN TUNKU TUN AMINAH

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

The construction industry has been struggling with the issue of inconsistent performance with respect to cost of projects, completion time and the delivery of a quality product. These challenges have been addressed by researchers with some success, however in contrast to other industries the construction industry is still seen to be lagging. One strategy that has evolved amongst construction practitioners and researchers is the adoption and adaptation of ideas and techniques developed within other industries. The major ones being the Manufacturing and the Information and Communication Technology fields.

The concept of Best Value, Value Maximization and Benefits Realization are a few notable concepts adapted from these fellow industries, but as yet to be realized as having a significant impact. This chapter provides an introduction to the main subject of Benefits Realization in the process of procurement of building projects, to start with. The research problem related to low achievement of client satisfaction on construction projects is identified. Within this context of client satisfaction, based on comprehensive literature review, it is clear that mainstream research on construction project performance has neglected the aspect of skills and competencies of key project

participants towards minimizing Transaction Costs (TCs) - a clear gap within the research literature. Viewed from the perspective of client satisfaction (which is represented in this thesis within the context of benefits maximization), the traditional procurement strategies, with respect to this measure for project success, that is achieved through the conventional *requirements capture* process (the precursor to benefits maximization) is presented.

A critical review of the current D&B approach is presented based on the understanding that the Design-Build (D&B) project delivery system was developed primarily as an attempt to overcome the shortcomings of the traditional procurement strategies, in relation to client satisfaction. The proposed research aim of a context-specific D&B contractors' team-competency approach is argued for (and tested) as a driver in order to Maximize Benefits with respect to satisfying clients' needs for D&B projects. In this research, the D&B project environment is viewed as currently being able to provide the most conducive platform for achieving benefits maximization. However, it is evident from previous research that it is failing to achieve the highly acclaimed advantages in comparison to traditional procurement. An outline research methodology is presented along with the roadmap towards achieving the research aim of establishing a contractors' team-competency action framework for benefits maximization in D&B projects. The structure of the thesis is represented in progressive phases based on the research flow, highlighting the actions to be taken to develop, evaluate and conclude the research findings that can contribute to higher efficiency for maximizing benefits. Thus, driving benefits realization by leveraging on team performance, enabled by team commitment that emphasizes on competency development for performative action through Knowledge-In-Action.

1.2 Background of the study

Generally, projects are driven by a need to satisfy a set of benefits for different groups of stakeholders (Winter *et al.*, 2006). As such project initiatives can only be regarded as successful if the intended benefits are realized (McCartney, 2000). Although it is

premised that projects are often to be delivered on time, cost and quality, but yet the expected benefits are not always realized. Recently, benefits realization (and management) has received greater attention in terms of being the “new” practice for private and public sector projects in a number of sectors, including housing development, education facilities and healthcare infrastructure.

Although the word ‘benefit’ is used widely in everyday life, it is very poorly defined. Benefit can simply be understood as a ‘*measurable improvement*’ (Sapountzis, 2013). Bradley (2010) defines benefit as an outcome of change which is perceived as positive by a stakeholder; and along similar lines of thinking, Ward & Daniel (2006) define it as ‘an advantage on behalf of a particular stakeholder or group of stakeholders’. The important point in the definitions is that benefits are owned by individuals or groups who want to obtain *value* from an investment (Glynne, 2007).

Within the above definitions of ‘benefit’, it is necessary to understand the term benefits realization. Benefits realization could be defined as experiencing the positive impact as a result of a change [or action]. However, by introducing the term ‘management’ in benefits realization, Bradley (2010) defines it as the *process of organizing and managing*, so that potential benefits arising from investment in change [or action] are actually achieved. Whilst, Turner (2014) defines benefits management as the process for the optimization of benefits from organization change programmes.

From the construction industry perspective, the ideal has always been to seek out procurement strategies and project delivery mechanisms that can achieve and even supersede the planned client’s needs and benefits. It is within this context that the Design-Build (D&B) approach is seen to have been initiated within the construction industry. The construction industry needs to innovate in order to keep pace with the changes that the world is constantly facing. In addition to responding to the pressing social, economic and technological challenges affecting all industries today, it cannot be denied that the opportunities and problems facing construction in the future will be very different from those of today. It is without doubt that the needs of society and demands of clients will not remain stagnant - requiring greater competency acquisition, commitment and better benefits realization management (BRM) strategies that will transform the way the built environment is designed, built and maintained to generate

better value. Thus, there is a constant need to seek out new techniques and tools to be able to deliver construction projects within the context of developing a sustainable built environment. This is evident in the growing concern and commitment to be more ecologically productive. It is in this sense that the concept of value is seen to be aligned, with the aim of achieving project success from a sustainability perspective. Additionally, the overarching concept of BRM is seen as being able to address issues within the broad spectrum of sustainable development, focusing on adding value and minimizing waste.

The D&B procurement method is one of the systems advocated by mainstream construction industry practitioners and researchers in order to overcome inadequacies of the traditional procurement method. The basic concept of the D&B approach is the client having the project contracted to a single organization (one stop shop total solution) that would be responsible for design, procurement and engineering as well as commissioning, allowing for integrated project delivery. D&B, as it was intended, appears to be a panacea to many of the problems faced by the clients and other key stakeholders in the construction industry. This delivery system has been used around the globe extensively and its popularity has grown substantially over the years (Emsen & Schexnayder, 2000). It is noted by Chan (2000) and Lam *et al.* (2003) that D&B has been used extensively to help deal with the problems associated with the traditional system. They however point out that the implementation of D&B is not without its problems, wherein clients and other stakeholders have increasingly shown concerns regarding the benefits of the D&B method in actual practice.

In Malaysia, not all the D&B projects were successfully delivered as designed and planned. The D&B concept has been labeled to be ‘designed to fail’ by the then Malaysian Second Finance Minister as reported by the New Sunday Times, February 4, 2007. This is due to the fact that, some of the D&B mega projects have failed to effectively deliver benefits as to client’s requirements (Jasri, 2011). It is noted by Gambo & Gomez (2015); Abdul Rahman *et al.* (2006); Seng & Yusof (2006); Isa *et al.* (2011); and Hashim *et al.* (2006) that clients’ expectations in the D&B delivery system are not adequately met and the system is not being practiced in the manner that is meant to leverage on its potential benefits in the Malaysian construction industry. It is

identified in the literature that a constraint such as lack of management expertise is also a contributor to D&B project failure.

Firstly, the significant problem that tends to impede the development of the D&B procurement approach is the nature of the management structure of the D&B companies in the Malaysian construction industry, wherein a fragmented approach still persists in the industry in spite of the supposedly one stop shop practice. The practice of the D&B delivery system in the Malaysian construction industry is characterized by the D&B organization outsourcing consultants (expertise) to execute their projects (Gambo & Gomez, 2015). This type of management structure is referred to here as the fragmented D&B; it is characterized by the nomination of external design consultants by the contractor to carry out the designs of the project (Masterman, 2002). These external consultants are coordinated by the in-house project managers who manage their activities in order to ensure, what seems to be the client's interest with regards to traditional client briefs and requirements capture. Such management structures are likely to result in various problems during project execution. This is due to the structure's inherent separated feature, which makes the system vulnerable to the problems that have long been associated with the traditional procurement approaches (Masterman, 2002).

It is clear that the development of the D&B concept, referred to as a mode of prime contracting, was well intended to improve coordination and communication in project delivery through a flatter organization structure with less fragmentation. However, this was not realized due to the *dominant product* and *activity-based organization principles* embedded within the industry. It is premised (hypothesized), in terms of situating this research, that the option of resorting to D&B as a total solution for project delivery seems not to have had a resounding success as the D&B benefits realization management strategies and core competencies are not embedded within the project delivery system to match the opportunities for benefits realization of the client's requirements. It is affirmed by Jaafar & Radzi (2012) that contractors in Malaysia are often nominated based on low-bid criteria, with little emphasis on their competencies, therein often leading to the production of a failed product that does not meet the client's needs. These failed projects have influenced the perception of the society and the industry that D&B will generate more problems rather than provide greater benefits, as

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